

REMARKS

Claims 1, 4-28, 30-32, 34, 35, 38, and 40-73 are pending in this application. Claims 2, 3, 29, 33, 36-37, and 39 are canceled. Claims 4-6, 10, 13, 20, 23-26, 30, 32, 34, 35, 40-43, 47-52, 56, and 57 have been amended. Each new claim depends from an allowed claim or from an allowable claim redrafted into independent form. Support for the amendments and new claims is found in the specification and claims as filed.

Allowed Claims

Applicants gratefully acknowledge allowance of Claims 1, 31, 38, and 58-73.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 34, 41, 47-49, 51, and 56 have been objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Claims 34, 41, 47-49, 51, and 56 have been rewritten in independent form. Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the objection to Claims 34, 41, 47-49, 51, and 56 be withdrawn.

Claim Rejection - 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

Claims 2, 4, and 5 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by Wu et al. (U.S. 4,827,064). Although Applicants do not necessarily agree with the propriety of the rejection, Claim 2 has been canceled without prejudice, solely to facilitate issuance of the claims indicated to be allowable. Claims 4 and 5, 13, 23, 30, 32, and 33 have been amended to depend from allowable Claim 34. Applicants reserve the ability to pursue the canceled claims, or similar claims, in one or more continuing patent applications. The rejection is therefore moot.

Claim Rejection - 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

Claims 3-5, 10-23, and 36 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by Koltermann et al. (U.S. 6,056,072). Although Applicants do not necessarily agree with the propriety of the rejection, Claims 3 and 36 have been canceled without prejudice, solely to facilitate issuance of the claims indicated to be allowable. Claims 4, 5, 10, 13, 10, 20, and 23 have been amended to depend from allowed Claim 2. Claims 11, 12, 14-19, 21, and 22 depend from allowed Claim 2 through one or more intervening claims. The rejection is therefore moot.

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Claim Rejection - 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 6-9, 24-28, 42-46, and 50 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over Slack (U.S. 6, 239,085) in view of Wu, Koltermann et al. (U.S. 6,056,072), and Lawate et al. (5,773,391). Although Applicants do not necessarily agree with the propriety of the rejection, amendments to the claims have been made such that Claims 6-9 now depend from allowed Claim 31, Claims 24-28 now depend from allowable Claim 34, and Claims 42-46 and 50 now depend from allowable Claim 41. The rejection is therefore moot.

Claim Rejection - 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 10-23, 29-30, 32, 33, 35, 40, 52-55, and 57 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as obvious over Koltermann et al. in view of Wu. Although Applicants do not necessarily agree with the propriety of the rejection, Claims 29 and 33 have been canceled, solely to pursue subject matter indicated to be allowable. Amendments to the claims have been made such that Claims 10-23, 30, 32, 35, and 40 now depend from allowable Claim 34, Claims 52-55 now depend from allowable Claim 51, and Claim 57 now depends from allowable Claim 51. The rejection is therefore moot.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is in condition for allowance. Should the Examiner have any remaining concerns that might prevent the prompt allowance of the application, the Examiner is respectfully invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number below.

Please charge any additional fees, including any fees for additional extension of time, or credit overpayment to Deposit Account No. 11-1410.

Respectfully submitted,

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